

SPORTS & LEISURE

Veteran equestrian Underhill got her start in Georgetown

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Staff Writer

Not many world-class equestrian riders likely got their introduction to horses at their neighbourhood YMCA, but that's where Canadian veteran Beth Underhill received hers as a child in Georgetown nearly 40 years ago.

Underhill, who will celebrate her 45th birthday next week, was in Halton Hills for the Canadian Country Classic show at Halton Place, which finished up Sunday.

A three-time Canadian champion with horses Monopoly and Altair, the Schomberg resident has represented Canada at 25 Nations' Cups, the Summer Olympics, Pan-Am Games and the World Equestrian Games. She now owns and operates Beth Underhill Stables and has about a dozen students under her consultation, while also continuing to compete successfully in the U.S. and Canada.

"I still remember Georgetown really well. I went to school at Howard Wrigglesworth Public School until I was eight and then our family moved away when my parents bought a farm," said Underhill, who was born in Guelph.

"We still have friends here and it's great to be back and support this show, because it's a great venue, very pleasant. We're pretty much on the road from January to November, in Florida for a couple of months, so it's nice to be able to commute between here and Schomberg this week."

Her current Grand Prix ride, Magdaline, has enjoyed another good season, yet doesn't quite make the grade for elite-level competitions such as the Pan-Am Games or next

year's Olympics in China. Underhill said if she's unable to develop a couple of her own young stable prospects, purchasing a proven jumper is another possibility.

With the now-retired Monopoly, Underhill earned more than \$1 million in show ring purse money and the combination qualified for the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain.

"(Magdaline's) a really solid 1.50 metre or the odd 1.60 metre, but she's not an Olympic-calibre horse, and because she has such a big heart I can't run her in events like that because it would be too tough on her," added Underhill about the 13-year-old Dutch-bred mare.

"Horses like Altair or Monopoly are hard to come across and expensive to go out and buy. I have a couple of young ones coming along but we're two years away from knowing whether they'd be that kind of quality or not."

Underhill is also tutoring a couple of promising young riders in Christopher Cullen and Asta Torokvei, who are currently in the talent squad level.

Underhill and Magdaline didn't fare well Sunday in the \$20,000 Grand Prix at Halton Place—an event she won last year—as the duo faulted four times in the first round (including one knockdown) to finish out of the top-10.

The second week of equestrian activities at Halton Place begins today (Wednesday) with preliminary classes, culminating Sunday with the \$75,000 FEI World Cup Qualifier starting at 2 p.m.

For more info and detailed schedules, visit the website www.canadiancountryclassic.com.

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BETH UNDERHILL



Georgetown native Beth Underhill, aboard Magdaline, competes in the Open Welcome Class at the Halton Classic Horse Show at Halton Place Thursday. Underhill faulted four times in the first round.

Photo by Ted Brown

Hockey's back!

The Georgetown Raiders kicked off their Provincial Jr. A Hockey League exhibition league schedule this past weekend with three games. Friday in Orangeville the Raiders fell 3-2 in a shootout before dropping a 5-3 decision to the Crushers at Alcott Arena Saturday. Sunday in North York the Raiders fell behind by two goals only to wind up winning (no score was available). Here, the Raiders' Jeremy Wick knocks the puck away from the Crushers' Scott Christie during Saturday's match.

Photo by Yves Desjardins



Eagles reach Jr. C semis

The Georgetown Junior Eagles reached the semifinals of the Ontario Junior C Championships held recently in Stratford.

Georgetown opened the tournament with a 2-1 extra innings win over Dundas before bowing 9-1 to Stratford. The Eagles, however, went on to win their next games— 2-1 against Kendal and 6-2 against Idderton.

That left Stratford, Idderton and Georgetown locked in a three-way tie. Idderton received a bye to the finals and Georgetown fell in the semifinal game to Stratford which went on to win the Junior C championship.

Team members were: Shawn Dunsmore, Adam Slessor, Jay Pshyk, Ryan Buisman, Justin Miil, Kevin Greer, Devon Wells, Bryan Takahashi, Andrew Jones, Mike Cooper, Trevor Wilson and Ryan Dunlop and coach John Wilson and coach and manager Murray Greer.

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